



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

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IM Weekly Highlights



- The shelter for the Williams Coulee site (Garfield County) is now in place. Power and propane tank installation activities have started. Tower erection at the site also is underway. IM staff would like to say "thank you" to Sheriff Edwards for his commitment to keeping contractors on schedule!
- Construction of the Belle Prairie site began this week. (See photo on back page).
- The exercise design team met with members of the NTIP in preparation for a June exercise to test and demonstrate the trunking system to ensure it meets Goal #2 of the National Emergency Communications Plan. (See story below).

Northern Tier Exercise Design Team Meets in Havre

By Marti Angeli, IM Communications Systems Planner
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Members of the Northern Tier's Exercise Design Team met in Havre on Dec. 16 with the intent of laying a foundation for future exercise development and planning. This initial meeting of the planning team comprised members from Blaine, Hill, Lincoln, Phillips, and Sheridan counties as well as representatives from the Northern Montana Hospital in Havre.

Members outlined an organizational chart and established target dates for future meetings where exercise goals and objectives will be refined. The exercise's stated goals are to be able to use the trunking system within a variety of jurisdictions and disciplines as well as to demonstrate the ability to use the system regionally, with mutual aid partners and with state and federal partners.

Plans are to conduct the exercise during the window of June 2-17, 2011. Creation of a planning team and the addition of other team members will take place in the coming weeks as development of the exercise matures.

"The exercise gives the counties and jurisdictions on the Northern Tier a great opportunity to validate their updated SOPs and improve the functionally and operations of the new system," said Bill Fleiner, Exercise Director.

Before departing, the team voted on a name for

the exercise and settled on "Northern Alliance" to symbolize the united effort in making the exercise a success.



(Left to right) Greg Speer (Phillips Co), Bill Fleiner (Broadwater Co. & Exercise Director), Kathy LaBaty and Lori Henderson ((Northern MT Hospital), Joe Parenteau (Hill Co. DES) and Beth Angeli,

New Representatives for the I-15/90 Corridor Consortium Named

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

At the Thurs., Dec. 17 meeting of the I-15/90 Corridor Consortium, two new Beaverhead County representatives were added: Mike McGinley, County Commissioner, was named as the primary representative while Scott Marsh, GIS Coordinator, will be the secondary representative. Project Director Dave McPherson also appointed Scott Marsh as the consortium's primary representative to the IM Technical Committee (IMTC) with Gary Wenger, Anaconda-Deer Lodge Communications Board, named as the secondary delegate.

Under the PSIC-funded construction report, members learned that plans are to turn up trunking at the Red Mountain site next week. In addition, radio equipment in the southwest loop sites that was cold installed earlier this year will be turned up and microwave dishes will be aligned as weather permits in the upcoming months. Dave Clouse, IM Project Manager, also reported that the fourth and final contract for microwave connectivity from Bozeman to Billings was just signed with the goal of having the work completed by June 30, 2011.

Bill Converse, Anaconda-Deer Lodge DES, reported that his jurisdiction recently gave the IM permission to share the use four pairs of frequencies. Members discussed the benefits of the IM system, particularly for the fire community, including additional

repeater sites to improve paging/alerting, the ability to talk back to dispatch, additional equipment, and enhanced radio coverage. Enhanced standardization and consistency also has been achieved.

Sheriff Walsh reported on recent IM Executive Committee meetings regarding IM funding issues, indicating that even though the IM budget has been pared down to the bare bones, a significant shortfall is still being faced. A board teleconference meeting is being held on Dec. 21 to solicit input on how the IM can be sustained until June, 2013.

The next I-15/90 meeting is scheduled for Thurs., Jan. 20, 2011 at the Butte-Silver Bow Chamber of Commerce, 1000 George St., at 10:00 am.

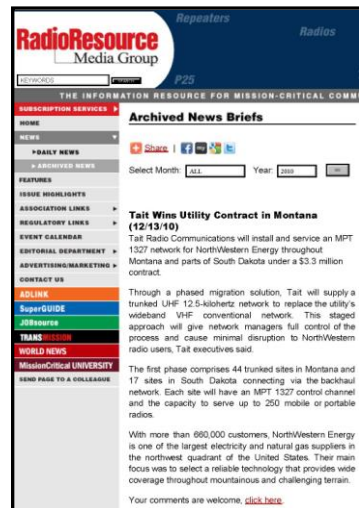
Tait Wins Utility Contract in Montana

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Tait Radio Communications will install and service an MPT 1327 network for NorthWestern Energy throughout Montana and parts of South Dakota under a \$3.3 million contract.

Through a phased migration solution, Tait will supply a trunked UHF 12.5-kilohertz network to replace the utility's wideband VHF conventional network. This staged approach will give network managers full control of the process and cause minimal disruption to NorthWestern radio users, Tait executives said.

The first phase comprises 44 trunked sites in Montana and 17 sites in South Dakota connecting via



the backhaul network. Each site will have an MPT 1327 control channel and the capacity to serve up to 250 mobile or portable radios.

With more than 660,000 customers, NorthWestern Energy is one of the largest electricity and natural gas suppliers in the northwest quadrant of the United States. Their main focus was to

select a reliable technology that provides wide coverage throughout mountainous and challenging terrain.

New Site Inspection Checklists on Website

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Over the last few months, the IM Technical Committee (IMTC) has developed several documents for site managers to use to ensure that appropriate

site inspections and maintenance procedures are conducted at IM communications sites on an annual basis.

These standardized lists clarify those items that should be examined on generators, propane tanks, site grounds, fencing, shelters, and towers. In addition, a generator maintenance list has been prepared as well as a master list of supplies needed to maintain sites and perform inspections. A sample site log book is provided as well. All of these Word documents are available at the following link:

<http://interop.mt.gov/imtc.mcp>.



Ground is broken on the Belle Prairie site in Dawson County.

Upcoming Meetings

- **Mon., Dec. 20**
IM Technical Committee (IMTC)
Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
MACo Large Conf. Rm., Lower Level, 2715 Skyway Dr.
- **Tues., Dec. 21**
IM Project Directors (IMPD) Webinar/Teleconference
9:00 am - 10:00 am
- **Mon., Jan. 3, 2011 (Please note change)**
IM Finance Committee (IMFC)
Helena • 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Anderson ZurMuehlen, 828 Great Northern Blvd.
- **Mon., Jan. 3 (Please note change)**
IM Governance Committee (IMGC)
Helena • 1:00 - 5:00 pm
Anderson ZurMuehlen, 828 Great Northern Blvd.
- **Tues., Jan. 4 (Please note change)**
IM Project Directors Meeting (IMPD)
Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
MACo Large Conf. Rm., Lower Level, 2715 Skyway Dr.
- **Thurs., Jan. 6**
Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) Consortium
Bozeman • 10:00 am – noon
Gallatin Co. EOC/SAR Building, 219 Tamarack